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For Your Interest

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Study Characteristics of New Iowa Farmers

About 2,450 Iowans began farming each year, 1959 and 1960, according to Donald R. Kaldor, Norman Strand and Thomas Jetton. Age of beginning farm operators varied from the mid-teens to the early sixties. But nearly two-thirds were between 19 and 29.

Nearly 18 percent started farming under a partnership arrangement, usually with relatives. Most, however, started as single proprietor tenants. Beginning operators usually started on farms with a smaller land base than the average of all Iowa farmers. The net worth of the beginning operator at the time of entry was about $9,000. Gifts from relatives played an important role in helping new farmers become established.

Compare Success of Young Farmers

Follow-up studies in 1956 and 1959 were made to compare the success of 81 farmers in southern Iowa who began farming in 1953. John F. Timmons and Dennis Repp used the farmers' gains in net worth as indicators of success. The operators averaged about $1,650 of capital accumulation per year. About 15 percent of the operators gained less than $500 in net worth per year.

The farmers had an average consumption expenditure of $2,705 in 1959. The highest average off-farm incomes were $1,528, and the highest average farm incomes were $1,738. Gifts received by the farmers averaged $363 in 1959, compared with $1,458 in 1956.

Operators who used the highest amounts of nonreal-estate credit in 1956 had the highest gains in net worth in 1959. Farmers with the largest net worth on Jan. 1, 1956, had the highest capital accumulation by 1959. Farmers with the highest average off-farm incomes also had the highest net worth at the end of 1959.

The economists found that the control of large amounts of resources was associated with high gains in net worth. The difference in the amounts of resources controlled between the high and low groups was $5,371 in 1956, but the spread increased to $7,189 in 1959.

The farmers who used the greatest amounts of nonreal-estate capital had the higher net incomes. A large amount of resources controlled also was associated with high amounts of net farm income.

Farmers in the study used an average of about twice the nonreal-estate credit in 1959 ($4,165) compared with 1956 ($1,914).

The farmers in this study had an average return to capital and farm labor of 14.8 percent on an average farm investment of $13,937 in 1959. Farmers with high amounts invested in land had a rate of return of 8.2 percent, compared with 19.7 percent for those who owned no land. These returns don't reflect the large capital gains that the landowners made from real-estate improvements and increasing land prices.

Farmers with a medium amount invested in livestock had a rate of return of 18 percent for their capital investment, compared with 11.8 percent return for farmers with small amounts invested in livestock. One could conclude that the farmers with low amounts invested in livestock might make higher gains in net worth by using more credit to increase their livestock operations.

grains

Test Combine Uses For Corn Harvest

Agricultural engineers at Iowa State used combines to produce ground ear corn from corn standing in the field. The ground ear corn was dried in a drying bin.

C. W. Bockhop, C. E. Goering and W. G. Lovely also harvested narrow-rowed, semi-dwarf corn with a grain combine by using the grain header instead of a special corn-header attachment. They said that such operations are feasible if dwarf corns are developed.

Test Weed Competition On Soybean Yields

Shading at the sides of soybean foliage reduced yields more than shading at the tops of the soybean plants, report D. W. Staniforth and Lowell P. Bush. Those are results from growing weeds in pots, growing weeds in four directions from the rows of soybeans and interplantings of tall and dwarf corn.

A three-year study of the competitive effects of foxtail species on Hawkeye soybeans revealed that giant foxtail produced more vegetative growth and caused greater bushel reductions in soybean yields than did yellow foxtail or green foxtail. There were no differences among the three weed species, however, when their competitive effects were compared on the basis of soybean yield reduction per hundredweight of weed infestations.

Soybean yield reductions resulting from weed competition were almost identical for nodulating and non-nodulating soybeans. These findings suggest that the competitive effects of weeds caused from shading and competition for moisture are independent of nitrogen effects on soybean yields.